

Thomas Jefferson to Lafayette, February 14, 1806, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE J. MSS.

Washington, Feb. 14, 06.

My dear Friend, —Your letters of 1805 which I have to acknowledge are of Apr. 22 & June 4, the last delivered by M de Lessert a week ago. In your preceding ones of 1804 the reason assigned for your not venturing across the ocean was certainly weighty, as a capture by the English would have been a very serious misfortune. Your presence at New Orleans would give security to our government there, but in the present state of things it is not certain you could give us your service there, for it seems very uncertain which of the two powers of Spain or England, by commencing hostilities against us first will force us into the scale of the other. If the former commences first, and it seems most imminent, you probably could take no part. As, before the receipt of your powers on the subject of your lands, I had ordered a survey of the vacant parcel adjoining to New Orleans, I have continued to press that part of the location, because it is under a peculiar difficulty. The law requires your locations to be in parcels of not less than 1000 acres each. The survey sent to me made but 6. or 700 as. I have requested Govr. Claiborne, either by including part of the lake or by some other device to have it made up 1000 as. in which case I can immediately sign a grant. It will be some time before I shall receive his answer. Mr. Madison has appointed M. Duplantier to make the other locations, for which no person is better qualified or better disposed. I inclose a letter for M. Tracy, making him my acknowledgements for the very acceptable present he was so good as to make me of his two works. For details of our affairs it is safer to refer you to Mr. Skipwith the bearer

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of this. Present my friendly respects to Me. De Lafayette, M. & Me. De Tessy, & accept assurances of my constant & affectionate friendship & respect.